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common yet deadly

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These tiny beautiful creatures are CORONAVIRUS. It is a positive and single-stranded RNA virus. The coronavirus family has large pleiomorphic spherical particles with bulbous surface projections that form crown-like spikes around the particles. They are also enveloped! They are sub-grouped into alpha, beta, gamma and delta. These viruses commonly cause mild to moderate upper respiratory tract illnesses.

All living things are constantly changing and evolving; the viruses also do. The pandemic occurs when the mutated viruses by chance attain the ability to infect humans instead of infecting only the animals. Many coronaviruses naturally infect animals. In fact, the first human coronavirus was only identified in the mid-1960s. Six coronaviruses that infect people are alpha subgroup 229E and NL63, and beta subgroup OC43, HKU1, SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV.

Most infected patients begin with a high fever with temperature greater than 38°C. The disease progresses with nonspecific symptoms such as headache, generalised discomfort, and body aches. Some people also have mild respiratory symptoms or diarrhoea. The patient's respiratory system (lungs and airway) will begin to be affected causing dry cough, breathing difficulties and eventually develops full-blown pneumonia which results in lack of oxygen in the blood. It can be fatal in the most severe cases.

